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Nancy Huston, *Carnets de l'incarnation: Textes choisis 2002–2015*. Arles: Actes Sud, 2016.

Huston's corpus is commonly characterised by its transnational and multi-generic format, and *Carnets de l'incarnation* is no exception. Huston draws inspiration from multiple contexts including a research trip to Israel, a gallery in Beijing, a New York book-club, and the Parisian *Hebdo* polemic surrounding the 2015 terrorist attacks. She also incorporates both public pieces (newspaper articles, critical prefaces, conference proceedings) and personal fragments (diary entries, poetry, and prose), playing with narrative style and shifting from the comic to the tragic. Huston pays homage to a wide spectrum of philosophers, artists, and writers, including Diane Arbus, Anaïs Nin, Nelly Arcan, Kate Chopin, Simone de Beauvoir, as well as Annie Leclerc and Romain Gary, on whom she has written extensively in two eponymous publications.

As with her previous amalgamated *textes choisis*, *Désirs et Réalités* (1995) and *Âmes et corps* (2004), Huston brings together a decade's worth of foundational essays centred on an overarching theme: in the case of *Carnets de l'incarnation*, a gendered mind-body dichotomy. Huston begins by acknowledging problems experienced primarily by women: prostitution and pornography; the Madonna-whore complex; and the reduction of women's identity to their bodily form (be they de- or hyper-sexualised). Huston then addresses male-orientated issues, namely, men's coercion into violent and dominant social positions, and their implication in paedophilia, crime, and war.

Huston situates these analyses at the intersection of biological determinism and social constructionism. On the one hand, Huston claims men have a naturally higher libido than women, and that women are predetermined to solicit the male gaze. On the other, Huston considers instincts to be dangerously distorted by social phenomena such as the sex industry, which exploits men's sexual drives and women's bodies to finance a neo-liberal market. Huston thus highlights the hypocrisy of our contemporary epoch which both denies sexual difference and profits from it. Where women are encouraged to define themselves according to their bodies, moreover, men are paradoxically taught to deny theirs. Huston insists that we should not overlook but learn from sexual difference, to harness its positive potential instead.

What could be interpreted as a contradiction thus constitutes an invitation to overcome binaries. The same is true for other dualisms in this collection, as with love-intellect, nihilism-idealism, corporeality-spirituality. As Huston confirms in her introduction, she seeks not coherence but polyphony, and invites us to embrace our material corporeality – men and women alike – to access a mode of spirituality fitting for our modern times.

How this spiritual state is to be achieved in practical terms, however, is left unanswered, and the book ends with a fictional tale of disempowerment: the narrator spies an approaching army and is unable to fend its advance. In true Huston style, this collection refuses neat categorisation and simple solutions. If any conclusive messages do stand out, it is that we can problematize cultural, racial, and gender divides by imagining the position of the Other, and that we must re-evaluate the causes and consequences of gendered bodily experience before it is too late.

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